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Chairman: Mr. Al-Hinai ..... (Oman)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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01-58723 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 27: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/C.3/56/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.11 entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly"

1. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution contained no programme-budget implications.

2. **Ms. Leyton** (Chile), speaking as the principal sponsor of the draft resolution, said that the following additional countries wished to sponsor the draft resolution: Armenia, Australia, Barbados, Belize, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Guinea, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Malta, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

3. *Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.11 was adopted.*

4. Subsequently, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Togo indicated that, if they had been present when draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.11 had been adopted, they would have joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 108: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/56/L.2, L.7 and L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.2 entitled "Preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family", and the amendments contained in document A/C.3/56/L.7

5. **Ms. Newell** (Secretary of the Committee) read out the corrections, which the representative of Benin had made orally when document A/C.3/56/L.7 had been introduced.

6. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution contained no programme-budget implications.

7. **Ms. Elisha** (Benin), speaking as the principal sponsor, said that the following additional countries wished to sponsor the draft resolution: Argentina, Belarus, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guinea, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone and Suriname.

8. *Document A/C.3/56/L.7, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

9. *Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.2, as amended, was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.9 entitled "Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: towards a society for all in the twenty-first century"

10. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution contained no programme-budget implications.

11. **Ms. Newell** (Secretary of the Committee) said it would be recalled that, when introducing the draft resolution, the representative of the Philippines had orally corrected the text.

12. **Ms. Garcia** (Philippines), speaking as the principal sponsor, said that the following countries also wished to sponsor the draft resolution: Andorra, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Georgia, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Jamaica, Latvia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Nicaragua, Norway, Peru, the Republic of Moldova, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, South Africa, the Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Zimbabwe.

13. *Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.9, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

Agenda item 109: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/C.3/56/L.3, L.13 and L.14)

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.3 entitled "United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing"

14. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had been recommended by the Economic and Social Council for adoption and had no programme-budget implications.

15. *Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.3 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.13 entitled "Arrangements regarding participation of non-governmental organizations in the Second World Assembly on Ageing"

16. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had been recommended by the Economic and Social Council for adoption and had no programme-budget implications.

17. *Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.13 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.14 entitled "Provisional rules of procedure for the Second World Assembly on Ageing"

18. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had been recommended by the Economic and Social Council for adoption and had no programme-budget implications.

19. *Draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.14 was adopted.*

Agenda item 112: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/56/3, A/56/38/Rev.1, A/565/174, A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/268, 279, 306, 316, 328, 329 and 472)

Agenda item 113: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (*continued*) (A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/306, A/56/319 and Add.1)

20. **Mr. Leal Cordeiro** (Angola) said that, despite the focus of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, gender inequalities remained a reality. It was his delegation's hope that the gender perspective would continue to be reflected in 2002 in the outcome of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the special session of the General Assembly on children and the International Conference on Financing for Development. He urged policy makers to highlight the financial situation of women in the outcome document to be submitted at that Conference; without that emphasis, economic disparities between men and women were unlikely to lessen.

21. The Government of Angola supported the recent adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on the right of petition, which would not only decrease discrimination but also provide a solid foundation for legal solutions to violations.

22. Angola was experiencing the dire effects of the ongoing internal conflict. The current lack of food supplies was even more devastating in rural areas, where women accounted for 30 per cent of heads of households. In the context of the Government's earmarking of aid for basic needs, the Ministry for Family and Women's Affairs had organized the second National Conference on Rural Women. Despite the conflict, a significant number of internally displaced persons and refugees — some 70 per cent of whom were women — had been relocated and given capital through microcredit programmes and farming supplies as part of the National Programme on the Advancement of Women. Some of the programmes, however, had suffered from financial problems and the lack of a peaceful environment.

23. The Government had agreed to collaborate with the Pan-African Women's Organization and the Angolan Women's Organization in organizing an international conference on poverty and its effects on women, to be held in Luanda in November 2001 with the objective of identifying new approaches to fighting poverty at the start of the new millennium.

24. The mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policies required the full engagement of Governments, the international community and civil society, together with close cooperation among international actors and a steady stream of accurate data to illustrate gender disparities and reflect the results of new policy measures.

25. **Ms. Afifi** (Morocco) said that her Government had taken action for the advancement of women in several areas. Among its top priorities were safe motherhood and the accessibility of family-planning services. Better primary health care would help to reduce maternal mortality by a targeted 30 per cent by 2005. Another priority area was education, with targets set for 2005 of a girls' school enrolment of 70 per cent and a reduction of 50 per cent in illiteracy among rural women.

26. Women's economic and social status would be improved through appropriate job-training programmes and access to microcredit and capital. Human-rights education, including dissemination of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, was planned in order to raise their

awareness of their fundamental rights and the mechanisms available to protect them from violations of those rights. Women's associations were also working with the relevant government ministries to develop a strategy to combat violence against women and girls.

27. She noted in conclusion that the partnership and support of the United Nations system had been essential to her Government's efforts to improve the status of women.

28. **Mr. Al-Ketbi** (United Arab Emirates), said that despite the social, economic and technological progress of the past decade, women, particularly in the developing countries, continued to face problems related to ill health, poverty, marginalization, violence and ignorance. Two thirds of all illiterate people throughout the world were women and they suffered particularly from ill health associated with poverty and lack of health care.

29. The 1995 Beijing Conference, which had identified 12 critical areas of concern in relation to the status of women, had been a turning point in worldwide efforts to improve women's status and enhance their role in development. However, the increasing economic and social disparity between the developed and developing countries, and the developing countries' lack of reliable sources of funding, had prevented them from giving effect to their national plans based on the Beijing Platform. His delegation therefore called on the international community, particularly the developed countries, and on international funding agencies such as the World Bank, to increase their assistance to the developing countries, particularly those that were giving particular attention to the needs of women and the family.

30. His delegation also emphasized the necessity of enhancing the crucial role played by the United Nations and its specialized agencies in development and in the implementation of the recommendations of its major conferences for enhancement of the cultural, social and economic status of women throughout the world. The activities of the United Nations Development Fund should also be strengthened, particularly in the field of research and studies, and in the implementation of development assistance projects in the poorest regions, particularly those suffering from the effects of war or occupation. The many problems faced by women and the family in those areas should be taken into account together with the nature and specificities of individual societies, particularly their traditions, customs and religious and social values.

31. His own country had enacted many laws and put in place arrangements to safeguard the legal rights of women with respect to property, access to education at all levels, training, health care and social services. It had also encouraged women to enter the labour market in both the private and public sectors, and to participate in all aspects of national development activities. The social-security provisions ensured that, in their capacity as wives and mothers, they were fully protected both financially and in terms of social services. Because of the Government's commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action, it was concentrating on human development for women, integrating them in national development plans and programmes and in regional and international activities. It was also ensuring that they were involved in decision-making in ministries and institutions on the same basis as men.

32. In conclusion, he expressed concern at the sufferings of millions of women and children in many regions of conflict, in particular those in the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied by Israel who were facing assassination, violence, brutality, arrests, starvation, the destruction of their houses, the confiscation of their land, and expulsion by the occupying forces. Such actions were a flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions, the rules of international humanitarian law and of human-rights instruments, foremost among which was the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949.

33. His delegation appealed to the international community to face up to its responsibilities with respect to the situation of Palestinian women, in particular by exerting greater pressure on the Israeli Government to end its occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan, and to seek a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region in order to ensure security, peace and stability for all peoples in the region.

34. **Ms. Kapalata** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, although government policy recognized the contribution and responsibility of both genders, the Women and Gender Development Policy adopted in 2000 laid emphasis on issues relating specifically to women. The policy aimed: to empower women to

overcome poverty; to highlight their contribution to the development of the family, society and nation and to fully recognize their rights; to underscore the value of both parents in their children's upbringing; and to accelerate national development by promoting gender equality. The Government recognized that the key to bridging the gap between its aspirations and achievements in those areas involved scrupulous implementation of relevant international commitments. Poverty, HIV/AIDS and persistent conflict in the subregion were the main factors hampering its efforts.

35. Modest progress had nonetheless been achieved in priority areas. Expanded educational opportunities (including the provision, since January 2001, of free basic education for all) had increased girl-pupil enrolment to nearly 45 per cent. In addition, the political and legal empowerment of women had been enhanced through training, the revision of discriminatory legislation and the promulgation of new laws. Women's representation in Parliament had, moreover, been increased from 15 to 20 per cent, the eventual target being 30 per cent representation by 2005. Furthermore, to alleviate the burden of poverty on women, the Government provided them with microcredit and had strengthened social services for women and girls. In all those endeavours, inter-agency and bilateral support had been much appreciated.

36. In view of the importance of addressing the precarious situation of rural women in developing countries, her delegation particularly welcomed the recommendations of the expert group meeting on the situation of rural women in the context of globalization, recently held at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. With regard to HIV/AIDS, her delegation supported the concept that women were central to prevention and to identifying sustainable solutions to the pandemic. Lastly, her delegation wished to reiterate its appeal for a concerted effort to promote gender parity within the Secretariat.

37. **Ms. Ivashchenko** (Ukraine), having welcomed the efforts of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to integrate a gender perspective into their plans of action, said that her own Government's plan of action for the advancement of women (2001-2005) took account of the needs of women in various sectors and aimed to strengthen gender policies in public institutions. Women and civil society were fully involved in the process. National policy sought to promote women's economic rights and to enhance their participation in political decision-making. Attention was also given to reproductive health care and safe-motherhood programmes, and to the eradication of violence against women.

38. A presidential decree on the advancement of the social status of women in Ukraine had been issued in 2001, and a programme to combat trafficking in women and children established. Despite such efforts, however, full gender mainstreaming in all sectors of society had yet to be achieved. With the national economy in transition, the status of women was currently in a process of adjustment. The Government was fully cognizant, however, of the measures it must implement to attain the full realization of women's rights in Ukraine. Its efforts would continue to be guided by the international standards to which it had subscribed.

39. **Ms. Deggeller** (Netherlands) said that conflict prevention, poverty eradication and the advancement of women were closely interconnected. Moreover, given that gender inequality hampered development efforts, development policies must incorporate the empowerment of women. In the aftermath of conflicts, an integrated approach to development was particularly vital. Nor must it be forgotten that it was women who often took the initiative to curb the use of violence in conflict situations. It was a matter of concern, therefore, that the marked absence of women in the Kosovo peace negotiations had served to perpetuate their marginalization in the political process following conflicts. It was indeed crucial that women's potential was recognized at the earliest stages of conflict management.

40. With the requisite foreign support, women's groups could contribute significantly to peace-building in their own countries. Her delegation could provide details of recommendations of national and international women's organizations which complemented the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809) (the Brahimi report). In particular, training should be provided to peacekeeping forces in accordance with the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693). The Government of the Netherlands, for its part, would be contributing $100,000 to that end. Drawing attention to one success story in respect of gender mainstreaming, she said that, of the first police

trainers to graduate from the Kosovo Police Service School established by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 19 per cent had been women — a high proportion compared to most European countries.

41. Women must be empowered to shape their own lives and societies. To that end, the international community must fully implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

42. **Mr. Coimbra** (Brazil) said that the United Nations had been at the forefront of efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The cycle of conferences dedicated to women's issues, in conjunction with other major world conferences, had created a solid conceptual basis and a series of commitments that had served as inspiration for the elaboration of national laws and policies. He also paid tribute to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

43. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), for its part, had become an increasingly important partner in his Government's efforts to promote the advancement of women. As evidence of the successful enhancement of women's participation in Brazilian politics, the quota of 30 per cent women electoral candidates in 2000 had been realized, with 317 female mayors having been elected (including six in the state capitals) and 200 women having taken office in local councils.

44. To improve the status of rural women, a government programme gave land tenure titles preferentially to women and provided opportunities for microcredit, technical assistance and social security, including maternity and retirement benefits.

45. The reduction of infant and maternal mortality was also a continuing priority, with free health-care services provided for all. Health programmes for women and girls in Brazil focused, inter alia, on early motherhood, family planning, sexually-transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Support was also provided to victims of sexual and domestic violence in special facilities located throughout the country. Education continued to be viewed as a key instrument for the eradication of poverty and for promoting the advancement of women. Girls and women currently represented half of all enrolments at every educational level.

46. Convinced that equality and the full realization of women's rights were an essential ingredient of democracy, his Government remained committed to providing an enabling environment for the empowerment of Brazilian women.

47. **Ms. Molaroni** (San Marino) said that in many parts of the world, cultural and traditional practices still limited women's freedom. In San Marino, however, the path toward gender equality had been relatively easy. Because of favourable economic conditions, women's participation in both the public and private sectors was significant. Wage equality between male and female workers had been achieved, as had equality in educational opportunity. With regard to equality before the law, the Parliament had recently passed a law which had begun to remedy the gap between men and women in the transmission of nationality.

48. Achieving gender balance must be a priority for all countries, and her delegation would support any reference to gender balance in the work of the Committee, in the hope of raising awareness of the issue among the public and Governments. The increase in violence against women was also a matter of concern, and her delegation welcomed the efforts being made within the European Union to address its causes. Her delegation was convinced of the need to change attitudes towards traditional and customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, to distinguish between a people's valued traditions and distortions and violations of rights. Once again, education to change perceptions, was the solution.

49. Her Government believed that good legislation, achieved through negotiation, dialogue and international cooperation, was the best way to achieve the advancement of women, and it was ready to contribute in any way possible to that cause.

50. **Miss Durrant** (Jamaica) said that the goals of gender equality and the promotion of women's rights remained primary challenges in the global effort to achieve sustainable development and peace. Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, women's participation in economic activity had increased, and gender perspectives were increasingly being reflected in actions at the global level. However, the systemic inequities characterizing the situation of women

remained deeply entrenched. Without a comprehensive approach to the social, economic and cultural disadvantages faced by women, change would fall far short of the ambitious targets set at the Beijing Conference and at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

51. While the global record of implementation included commendable achievements, it also demonstrated several areas of weakness. The persistent disparities between women and men in health, education, employment and human rights were further compounded by globalization, which had the potential to erode economic and social gains. Women must have equal access to information and communications technologies to aid in their empowerment, and Governments must ensure that gender was taken into account in all policy areas. Her delegation was pleased that among the issues highlighted at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly had been the feminization of poverty and the differing effects of globalization, trade liberalization and external debt on men and women.

52. Other urgent challenges included an increase in trafficking in women and girls and other forms of exploitation as a result of transnational organized crime, women's increasing risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, and gender-based violence. The active participation of women at all levels of decision-making would be required to combat those problems. Progress was being made, however: Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women in armed conflict was a clear recognition of their role in conflict prevention and resolution. Her delegation also welcomed the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and other agencies to ensure that gender mainstreaming remained a priority within the United Nations system.

53. For its part, Jamaica, through its National Bureau of Women's Affairs, had initiated several programmes to address such issues as poverty eradication, violence against women, education and training, along with a review of its legislation. The empowerment of women in rural communities, the provision of microcredit, improving conditions for household workers and greater access to basic health care for all women represent important pillars of its efforts to advance the welfare of women.

54. **Ms. Limpias Chávez** (Bolivia) said that the areas of special concern listed in the Beijing Platform for Action continued to be priorities for Bolivia, and the Government had designed development policies aimed at promoting gender equality. An area of great importance to a multi-cultural country like Bolivia was rural development and the status of rural and indigenous women, and a new amendment to the law on agrarian reform recognized the need for equality for women, regardless of civil status, in distribution, administration, ownership and access to land. Family violence was another area of concern, and the national plan of action on violence against women provided for special training for members of the legal system in dealing with its victims. The educational-reform programme also included components aimed at the needs of rural and indigenous women. The national maternal- and child-health programme contained aspects relating to sexual and reproductive health and family planning, and provided guidance to women in taking decisions on their own sexuality and motherhood.

55. The high rates of poverty in Bolivia resulting from inequality and exclusion had continued to worsen over the past decade. Marginalization was not limited to economic level or social class, but was also related to ethnic group and gender. Nevertheless, the Government had continued to stress the need to incorporate a gender perspective into all social-development activities, in particular poverty eradication. Since the feminization of poverty affected rural and indigenous women most severely, the dynamics of the rural economy must be understood in order to reorient policies to enhance their participation in the economic, social and political spheres. A number of economic and social projects carried out with international assistance had incorporated a gender perspective.

56. Although it was the responsibility of the Government to include the gender perspective in all its policies, society as a whole must work to ensure that women had access to education and health care, were not excluded from rural-development and poverty-eradication efforts, and could live free of all forms of violence.

57. **Mr. Ahmad** (Iraq) said that the advancement of women could be achieved only within the framework of a comprehensive approach to human rights, taking into account economic, social and political circumstances. In his own country, women had, over the centuries, acquired rights and privileges that were

sanctioned by custom and enshrined in law. The Government had enacted legislation that gave substance to the provisions of Islamic law and was consistent with Iraq's cultural and humanitarian heritage, and ensured women's rights to health, education and participation in political life and in activities to improve their economic and social status. Iraq had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had been incorporated in national law. The Government had also taken steps to fulfil its obligations in terms of the Beijing Platform for Action by establishing a national strategy for the advancement of women and by setting up a high-level national committee for that purpose, responsible for devising policies and establishing mechanisms for their implementation.

58. The Government had also established specialized committees for the advancement of women in official establishments and professional organizations and had given an impetus to the activities of non-governmental organizations concerned with women's affairs, in particular the General Federation of Iraqi Women, and had convened many national and international conferences to discuss the status of women.

59. The progress attained by Iraqi women had, however, been undermined by the continuing blockade maintained against Iraq for the past 11 years, which had resulted in the collapse of the infrastructure and had impaired all aspects of the life of Iraqi society, particularly children and women. That had been confirmed in reports issued by international organizations working in Iraq such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

60. The environmental pollution caused by the use by the allied forces of depleted-uranium weapons had given rise to medical problems among women, including sterility, genetic malformation and cancer.

61. The Government had reported on the status of women in Iraq to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its second and third periodic reports, which had been considered in June 2000. The Committee had noted that the sanctions and the embargo had impeded the advancement of women and had stated that the situation was an obstacle to full implementation of the Convention. It had also commended the Government for its political will to implement the Convention and for the legislative measures it had taken in that connection, in particular the establishment of the high-level National Committee for the Advancement of Iraqi Women and of a national strategy for the advancement of women.

62. In conclusion, he said that it was incumbent on the international community to show concern for the suffering inflicted on his country, which was a human tragedy amounting to genocide and was a violation of all relevant human-rights instruments.

63. **Ms. Alvarez** (Dominican Republic), confining her remarks to the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), recalled that in 1999 the United Nations Secretariat had proposed the introduction of the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System in order to revitalize that body. Although the Institute had successfully adopted the new methodology, its very survival was threatened by the lack of financial support required to correct its structural difficulties. In order to alleviate the situation, the General Assembly, in decision 55/457, had approved a supplement of up to $800,000 to allow INSTRAW to cover its operations in 2001. The Institute's difficulties had continued, however, owing to the low level of voluntary contributions to its Trust Fund. Consequently, in its resolution 2001/40, the Economic and Social Council had recommended that the General Assembly should consider certain arrangements to fund the Institute's operations temporarily and to consider requesting the Joint Inspection Unit to review the Trust Fund and make an urgent evaluation of the Institute's activities..

64. The Government of the Dominican Republic, as the host country, deemed it urgent that the United Nations should consider practical options to allow the Institute to function in a sustainable form. Restructuring had not been part of past efforts to revitalize INSTRAW, which had simply adopted a new working method and progressively reduced its personnel. An evaluation of the Institute's structural problems was urgently needed, together with the identification of sources of funding and the level of support required for its effective functioning.

65. Since INSTRAW was the only entity within the United Nations system dedicated to research, training and information dissemination on women and gender issues, and was therefore of particular importance for

developing countries, the concerted efforts of Member States, the host country and the United Nations Secretariat were essential if it was to regain its institutional strength.

66. **Mr. Laurin** (Canada), noting that gender equality was relevant to all the work of the United Nations, said that Canada had introduced draft resolutions on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand in the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, identifying new mechanisms to assess progress in implementing the Council's agreed conclusions and, inter alia, calling for a future coordination segment of the Council to follow up those conclusions.

67. Progress had been made in improving the status of women in the United Nations system. His Government strongly supported the Secretary-General's recommendation for gender experts in the office of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. The achievement of 50/50 gender balance in the system, however, still fell short of the target. Member States had an important role to play in nominating more female candidates for election to United Nations bodies.

68. Member States could be proud of progress towards gender equality, which included Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and his delegation supported efforts to integrate its provisions into United Nations day-to-day activities. It also supported the pivotal roles of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and UNIFEM in focusing on the implementation of the resolution. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol were important mechanisms for making progress. However, universal ratification had not yet been achieved and implementation was hampered by the large number of reservations that were contrary to the purpose of the Convention.

69. **Mr. Paclisanu** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that ICRC had repeatedly expressed concern about the situation of women in humanitarian emergencies. At the twenty-seventh International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, ICRC had pledged to promote respect for women in armed conflict. It had just published a study on the impact of war on women, based on its experience, entitled *Women Facing War*.

70. The study showed that women's experience of war ranged from taking an active part as combatants to being targeted as members of the civilian population; it entailed separation, loss of family and livelihood, risk of sexual violence, wounding, deprivation and death. Women faced war with courage and resilience applied to unfamiliar roles; it was therefore of capital importance to involve them in measures taken to protect and assist them. The generally accepted limits to warfare were frequently breached and experience had shown that women's safety was not guaranteed by the respect due to them. A major challenge was how to secure respect for the distinction between civilians and combatants in war so as to prevent further widening of the scope of violence. Existing norms of humanitarian law provided adequate coverage of the needs of women in situations of armed conflict; mechanisms for enforcing rights and redressing violations were therefore of crucial importance. Recent developments, nationally and internationally, in the prosecution of those responsible for war crimes were an important step in the fight against impunity.

71. While ICRC was committed to assisting and protecting women, improving the lot of women in times of war was everyone's responsibility. It was time for international humanitarian law to be put into practice.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.